

WINLIST

Version 1.0

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Summary

Simple and fast Windows text file printing utility for HP Laserjet compatible printers. Supports drag and drop for file selection. Duplicates print formatting capabilities of PC Magazine utility LASERLST.

Requirements

Windows 3.1 and BWCC.DLL (supplied) in current directory or on DOS path. A HP Laserjet PCL compatible printer.

Description

Winlist is a simple printing utility for Windows. It is designed to do one thing very well - print two pages of ASCII text on a single page of paper on any printer compatible with the Hewlett Packard Series II or greater printers.

Winlist owes its inspiration to the great PC Magazine print utility LASERLST (Utilities April 11, 1989) created by Michael Holmes and Bob Flanders.

Running Winlist is simple. Double click on the WINLIST.EXE file from the file manager or drag the file to you Program Manager and double click. Winlist will then install itself on your Windows desktop. Using File Manager, select any text files you wish to print and drag them to Winlist. When you release your mouse button, Winlist will display the selected files and prompt you if you wish to continue. Just click on OK to print all the files. Winlist will then proceed to paginate and issue the HP PCL (Printer Control Language) codes necessary to print the specified files in landscape mode with two text pages on one single sheet of paper. Winlist directly mimics the format capability of LASERLST and should appear identically to output produced by this program.

While Winlist behaves as a normal Windows program and will display the files being printed in the Print Manager, you should be aware that Winlist takes some liberties in its interaction with Windows printing. Firstly, Winlist is not a printer independent program. I have embedded the PCL commands into Winlist and used the Windows Escape-PASSTHROUGH command to bypass the printer driver. I realize that this is not the Microsoft endorsed way of controlling a printer but I believe it is justified when you consider one thing: SPEED. You will note that Winlist is blindingly fast. This is due directly to the fact that it uses the PCL commands to draw the centered vertical bar and uses the resident built in fonts for the text. A program that uses the printer independent method via GDI and System fonts can take as much as 100 times longer to print than Winlist. For a utility program such as this I believe that targeting a very popular printer emulation such as the HP Laserjet is justified. Future revisions of this program may offer a device independent (i.e. slower) mode to satisfy the purists.

It may be worth noting that even Microsoft doesn't follow its own rules when it comes to printing. Try the following experiment:

Create a table in Word for Windows 2.0 and place a border around all the cells. Print the page to file (be sure to use the HP Laserjet driver) and examine the output. You'll notice that the resulting file is minuscule. When you review the contents of the file you will see it contains nothing but HP PCL escape codes. If this was a device independent printout, the file would be much larger and be in Windows metafile format.

Clearly Microsoft is checking at print time to see if the selected printer is Laserjet compatible and using the faster PCL commands if a Laserjet is detected.

Programming Notes

Winlist was written with Turbo Pascal For Windows. The LASERLST original assembly source code was consulted for the PCL Escape commands and program logic. Neil Rubenking's source code for BURNUP.PAS was used as a starting point for the drag and drop support. Anyone interested in programming with TPW would do well to purchase either Neil's book *Turbo Pascal for Windows Techniques and Utilities* or Tom Swan's *Turbo Pascal for Windows 3.0 Programming*. The Windows printer interface code was supplied by Paul Bayliss in his very helpful WINPRINT.PAS unit.

Distribution and Use of Program

In the interest of promoting the use and popularity of Windows I am asking people to copy this program freely. Even so, this is not public domain software and I own the copyrights to this material. In the spirit of the free exchange of computing information, and as a tribute to such "freeware" pioneers as Vernon Bueg, I simply ask that you abide by the following guidelines:

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Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Enjoy!